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THE FIRST DISCOVERED CITY OF CIBOLA

BY

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THE FIRST DISCOVERED CITY OF CIBOLA

BY F. W. HODGE

Through the labors of Mr. Adolf F. Bandelier* it has become quite definitely established that the region now known as Arizona was first visited by whites in the middle of the year 1538, when Fray Pedro Nadal and Fray Juan de la Asuncion (or de Olmeda) penetrated the southern part of that territory. There the friars learned that to the northward were many-storied pueblos inhabited by people who wore clothing and possessed an abundance of turkis. This was probably the first news of the Pueblo Indians to reach Mexico, for although Nuño de Guzman about nine years previously (in 1529) heard of the existence of "seven towns" in the northern country, it is possible that the subsequently discovered "Seven Cities of Cibola" were quite distinct from these. Indeed, mention of a suppositional group of "seven caves" in the new country was made soon after the Columbian discovery, while a legend of seven cities originated in the Old World as early as the ninth century, was imported to the New, and coincidently found its realization in the so called Seven Cities of Cibola.

In September, 1538, or very shortly after the return to the City of Mexico of the two monks above mentioned, Marcos de Niza, a Franciscan friar, set out from the capital under authority and instruction from Antonio de Mendoza, then viceroy of New Spain, to explore the inhabited region of the far north. There accompanied Niza, as guide, a negro named Estévan or Estévanico, who had been a companion of Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, Andréz Dorantes, and Alonzo de Castillo Maldonado. These four survivors of the ill-fated expedition of Narvaez, which about 1529 was wrecked in the Gulf of Mexico west of the Mississippi delta, found their way to the Mexican capital after seven years' wandering and untold suffering.

* *Contributions to the History of the Southwestern Portion of the United States*: Arch. Inst. Papers, v, 1890. *Documentary History of the Zuñi Tribe*, in Jour. Am. Ethnol. and Arch., edited by J. Walter Fewkes, iii, 1892.

The story of Niza's journey has been more than twice told; hence it is not necessary to repeat it in detail here.* The negro was sent in advance with a number of Indians, who were joined by others as they proceeded on their journey. While among the Opatas of Sonora, Estévan sent to Niza the first information regarding Cibola; and as the friar hastened onward, being hospitably received by the Piman natives, through whose territory he was now traveling, the news of the populous and wealthy nations of the north received through runners sent by the negro grew more and more promising. The so-called *despoblado*, now covered in part by the White Mountain Apache reservation, was soon crossed, but when within two or three days' journey of Cibola the friar was astonished at meeting one of the Indians who had accompanied Estévan and learning from him that the negro and a number of his Indian companions had been killed by the Cibolans, and that those who had escaped were fleeing for their lives.

It is not necessary to enter into details concerning the death of Estévan, nor to relate the causes which led to it. Friar Marcos held a parley with his natives, hoping to induce them to accompany him to Cibola, but they were so overcome by fear as well as so incensed at the death of their kinsmen, for which they held Niza responsible, that they not only refused to accompany him, but threatened his life. The judicious distribution of some articles which Fray Marcos had brought with him, however, dissuaded the Indians from executing their threats, and he even finally succeeded in inducing them to continue the journey; but when within a day's travel of the first village they encountered two more fugitives from Cibola, sorely frightened and covered with blood. The sight of the wounded and abject Indians renewed the anguish of their brethren and it took Niza a long time to soothe them.

Himself threatened with death by his Indian companions, the friar had no hope of entering Cibola, yet he was bent on obeying the orders of the viceroy, if his life should be spared, by at least looking upon the town. At last, accompanied by his own Indians

* For fuller accounts see Bandelier, *op. cit.*; also his "*Discovery of New Mexico by Fray Marcos of Niza*," in *Mag. Western History*, September, 1886. *Early Explorations of New Mexico*, by Henry W. Haynes, in Winsor's *Narr. and Crit. Hist. Am.*, vol. ii, chap. vii. W. W. H. Davis, *Spanish Conquest of New Mexico*. Reference to original documents are given in these treatises.

and two chiefs of the tribe* whose people had been killed with Estévan, the obedient Niza made his way to the heights overlooking one of the towns. Here he erected a small cross, formally took possession of the country, and hastened back to Mexico. Upon his arrival he submitted to the viceroy a narrative of his exploits.

Careful attention was apparently not given by the officials to Niza's *relacion*, for there was a notable lack of discrimination between the record of his personal observations and of the stories which were communicated to him by the Indians whom he encountered concerning the country and its wonderful riches. Consequently, when Coronado and his army, guided by Niza, in the following year found that Cibola comprised several villages of stone and mud, with no gold or other metals, their disappointment knew no bounds, and the anger of the soldiers and the maledictions they uttered against the defenseless friar are mentioned by both Coronado and Castañeda, neither of whom forgot to contribute his share of calumny.

Mr. Bandelier has established quite satisfactorily that Niza was honest in his assertions, the fabrications concerning Cibola being recorded by the friar as having come to him through hearsay.

It is regarding the identity of the village at which Estévan lost his life and which Niza observed from a distant height that question has arisen. The name of one of the Cibolan villages the friar learned from an old Zuñi whom he found living with one of the Piman tribes and who had been a fugitive from Cibola for many years. This name was Ahacus, and is identical with Hawikuh, a pueblo occupied by the Zuñis until about 1670, when the Apaches compelled its abandonment. It should be remembered, however, that the name Ahacus was not applied by Niza to the pueblo visited by Estévan and seen by himself, nor indeed to any other pueblo; hence the question as to which of the cities of Cibola was first discovered.

The place of the killing of the "Black Mexican" is fixed by Zuñi tradition at K'iakima, and this tradition Mr. Bandelier has attempted to substantiate by applying thereto the description by Niza as well as by other documentary testimony bearing on the point. It is my purpose to show that not K'iakima but

* Probably the Sobaipuri Papagos.

Hawikuh was the town of Cibola discovered by Niza, that the latter village alone corresponds substantially with the settlement described by the friar, and that Zuñi traditional accounts of events which occurred over three centuries ago are not worthy of consideration as historical or scientific evidence.

In order that there may be no difference in terms employed I will recite Mr. Bandelier's own translation from the Spanish of the description of the Cibolan village seen by Niza when he took possession in the name of the King of Spain of the territory now forming Arizona and New Mexico.

Reviewing that portion of the friar's narrative relating to his desire to continue onward to Cibola after the death of Estévan and some of his companions, Mr. Bandelier says: "His Indians were unwilling to accompany him. They not only resisted his entreaties, but threatened his life, in atonement for the lives of their relatives slaughtered at Cibola. He pleaded and remonstrated, but they remained stubborn. At last two of their number—'principal men,' he says—consented to lead him to a place whence he could see Cibola from afar. [Then quoting Niza:] 'With them and with my Indians and interpreters I followed my road till we came in sight of Cibola, which lies in a plain on the slope of a round height. Its appearance is very good for a settlement,—the handsomest I have seen in these parts. The houses are, as the Indians had told me, all of stone, with their stories and flat roofs. As far as I could see from a height where I placed myself to observe, the settlement is larger than the city of Mexico.' . . . Here, again, in sight of Cibola [now continues Bandelier], his Indian guides reiterated the statement that the village* now in view was the smallest one of the seven, and that Totontec [Tusayan] was much more important than the so called Seven Cities. After taking possession of Cibola, Totontec, Aens, and Marata for the Spanish crown, raising a stone heap, and placing a wooden cross on top of it with the aid of the natives, and naming the new land the 'New Kingdom of Saint Francis,' the friar turned back, 'with much more fright than food,' as he very dryly but truthfully remarks."†

* The statement in his *Gilded Man* (p. 155) that Niza and his companions "at last reached a hill whence they looked down into a valley in which lay several villages" is an error; but one village was seen.

† Bandelier, *Contributions*, op. cit., p. 160, 161.

The natural approach to Zuñi from the southwestward, the direction whence Niza came, is by way of Little Colorado and Zuñi River valleys. Any other route from that direction would lead through a region of utter desolation, extremely difficult of travel by reason of its broken and arid character. The valley through which Zuñi river flows on to the Little Colorado part of the year, is easy to travel, and it may be reasonably assumed that water was abundant at or within easy reach of the sandy river bed when Niza's little force wended its way toward Cibola late in May of the year 1539. To have left the valley would have increased the distance which the barefoot friar must traverse, besides leading him over an indescribably dreary and rugged stretch. It therefore would seem that Niza, as well as Estévan, approached Zuñi by the valley route over which Coronado, guided by Niza, went a year later—a route leading directly to Hawikuh, the southwesternmost of the Cibolan towns, and one of the two largest of the group. From the southwest K'iakima, which lies at the southwestern foot of Tâaiyalone or Thunder mountain, in the eastern part of the plain, can be reached only by the tortuous route alluded to. Moreover, K'iakima was the most remote of all the Cibolan pueblos when approached from the southwest, Matsaki alone excepted.

In the light of these facts, then, what would have been Niza's object in visiting K'iakima, particularly when guided by unwilling natives, who evidently had visited Cibola before? Had he made a detour before reaching the vicinity of Hawikuh for the purpose of viewing K'iakima from the adjacent mesas, Niza scarcely would have used the words: "I followed my road until we came in sight of Cibola;"* that is, the road he was following; the *only* road.†

The friar describes the pueblo as lying "in a plain at the slope of a round height." This is one of the most significant points in the narrative in favor of Hawikuh. This ruin was surveyed by

*The term Cibola is specifically employed by Friar Marcos to designate the single village which he saw.

† "There existed, in 1539, and prior to it, quite an intercourse between Zuñi and the land-tilling aborigines south of the Gila river. That intercourse took the form of journeys made by the Opatas, the Southern and Northern Pimas, and possibly the Endeves and Jovas, to Cibola-Zuñi, for the purpose of acquiring turquoises and buffalo hides."

Bandelier: *Documentary Hist.*, op. cit., pp. 3, 4. This being the case, there must have been a well-used trail for Niza to follow via Zuñi valley to Hawikuh, the only practicable route.

Mr. Cosmos Mindeleff, and a carefully prepared ground-plan is reproduced in the memoir "Architecture of Tusayan and Cibola," by Victor Mindeleff, in the eighth annual report of the Bureau of Ethnology. This author describes (p. 80) the ruin of Hawikuh as "occupying the point of a spur projecting from a low rounded hill," a description coinciding precisely with that by Niza. Moreover, Hawikuh is so situated *in* a plain as to command a view for miles in every direction,* a situation worthy of the enthusiasm of even the undemonstrative Niza, who described it as "the handsomest I have seen in these parts." K'iakima, perched on its inconvenient knoll of talus and cowering under the protection of old Tâaiyalone,† could not have conjured up this outburst of praise from the honest old friar.

K'iakima, it will be seen, is not in a plain. A view toward that pueblo from the southern heights is completely closed by Thunder mountain, which here seems to wall the very universe.‡ Furthermore, I am confident, through personal observation, that the mountain does not appear to be round from either the west or the south.

Niza could never have been so deceived in the appearance of K'iakima as to have said: "Where I placed myself to observe, the settlement is larger than the city of Mexico." Such a comparison might truthfully have been made with Hawikuh, however, situated as it was in a broad plain, with no beetling height to belittle it.§

Mr. Cosmos Mindeleff, who made a careful survey and study of the K'iakima ruin, informs me that in all probability the houses did not exceed one story. Those of Hawikuh, in the language of Mr. Victor Mindeleff, considering "the large amount of debris and the comparative thinness of such walls as are found, suggest that the dwellings had been densely clustered and carried to the height of several stories." In this connection it is of

*See plates XLVII and XLVIII of the Mindeleff paper referred to. The ruined church dates from about 1629.

†See Mindeleff, *op. cit.*, plates LII and LIII.

‡The view of the mountain shown in plate LIX of Mindeleff's paper is from the west. K'iakima is situated near the corner at the right of the picture, Matsaki at the corner to the left.

§Mr. Baudelier believes that the population of the City of Mexico could not have exceeded 1,000 at this date. Hawikuh in 1540 numbered 200 warriors (Coronado says houses) or between 800 and 900 souls. Judging from the extent of the ruins of K'iakima, its population could not have been half as great.

moment to observe that Niza speaks of the houses as "all of stone, *with their stories* and flat roofs," a reference that under the circumstances could not pertain to K'iakima.

The reiteration of the Indians "that the village now in view was the smallest one of the seven" I believe to have been mere braggadocio, and contained as much truth as their allegation in the same breath that Tusayan was much more important than Cibola. Any statement to the effect that the smallest village of the Cibolan group was larger than the City of Mexico is incredible.* Niza has shown himself to have been a man of truth. The many groundless assertions of the Indians as recorded throughout this and subsequent Spanish narratives speak for themselves.†

Yet the clause "the village now in view" is of the utmost importance. Indeed, if there were no other evidence that Hawikuh was the village seen by Niza this would suffice, for inasmuch as K'iakima is visible only from the southeast and south, there is no point of view from these directions that would not include Halona‡ (the site of the present Zuñi), and from any point farther westward along the southern eminences Matsaki also would have been seen. From the heights south of the plain on which Hawikuh was situated, however, one village only was observable in the sixteenth century. That village was Hawikuh, and the massive walls of the ruined adobe church erected in the seventeenth century still rise above the plain. T'kanawe§ (a triple pueblo of which Kechipauan formed a part), on the

*The *Postrera de Sivola* (1540) says the largest village of the province "may have about 200 houses, and two others about 200, and the others somewhere between 60 or 50 and 30." According to Vetancurt, Halona and Hawikuh were the largest villages a few years before the revolt of 1680, with 1,500 and "more than 1,000" inhabitants respectively. In Coronado's time Matsaki was regarded as the largest of the Cibolan pueblos, but it had degenerated during the following eighty or ninety years. Accepting the figures of the *Postrera*, that three villages (Halona, Hawikuh, and Matsaki) had 200 houses each, the largest of the remaining four pueblos could not have exceeded 60 houses, or about 250 inhabitants, while the smallest of the seven cities had but 30 houses with about 150 occupants. The population of K'iakima therefore must have been between 150 and 250, a figure far below what would have been regarded a fair comparison with the Mexican capital.

†It will be remembered that the Quivira delusion was due to the misrepresentations of the Indian Bigotes.

‡And also Pinawa if that village was one of the group.

§T'kanawe is the "Canabi" of Oñate (1598), and was one of the Cibolan cities. It contains the standing walls of a stone church which in all probability was never finished or used. The village is not mentioned by Vetancurt, consequently it appears to have been abandoned between 1629 and 1670, the latter being the approximate date of the abandonment of Hawikuh.

mesa to the southeastward, the nearest settlement to Hawikuh when that village was inhabited, could be seen neither from the valley below nor from the adjacent heights. Hawikuh, therefore, necessarily must have been "the village now in view."

Mr. Bandelier's belief that K'iakima was discovered by Niza is, it appears, based mainly on tradition. Concerning the visit of Estévan to the Zuñis, two accounts have been recorded by Mr. Cushing,* each of which places the scene of the killing at K'iakima. The text of one of these stories is approximately accurate; the other maintains that the wise men of the Kâ-kâ order took Estévan "out of the pueblo during the night† and gave him a powerful kick that sped him through the air back to the south, whence he had come." A tradition so contorted by its authors that it bears but little semblance of its original form is worthy of serious consideration only in so far as it aids in establishing the maximum age at which the authenticity of Zuñi tradition ceases.

Regarding the seven cities of Cibola, also, tradition is seriously lacking. The early Spanish names of five of the towns are: Maçaquia (Matsaki), Coquimo (K'iakima), Aquico (Hawikuh), Canabi (T'kanawe or K'ianawe), and Alona (Halona). Thus far the identification is simple; but neither Mr. Bandelier nor Mr. Cushing has been able to identify satisfactorily the Aquinsa‡ mentioned by Oñate in 1598, while the Zuñi name of the seventh pueblo (the Spanish equivalent of which was never recorded) will in all probability never be definitely determined.§ It is quite apparent, then, that without the aid of Spanish records we would not know the names of any of the pueblos occupied by the Zuñis three centuries and a half ago (with the possible exception of Halona, the most recently occupied of the group), for the only names which the Indians are now able to give are those which bear close resemblance to the names preserved in Spanish records. Where these fail native tradition also fails.

* Arch. Inst. Papers, op. cit., p. 154.

† According to all the Spanish accounts, Estévan was killed in the morning while attempting to escape.

‡ Mr. Bandelier suggests Apinawa (= Pinawa); Mr. Cushing gives Ketchina with a query, and Kwakina in different writings. See Jour. Am. Eth. and Arch., vol. iii; Compte Rendu Congrès Int. des Amér., 7me. sess. (1888). Berlin, 1890; The Millstone, Indianapolis, April, 1881, p. 55.

§ Mr. Cushing has suggested both Hampassawan and Pinawa, the latter being Bandelier's Aquinsa. Bandelier (*Contributions*, op. cit., p. 171) mentions Ketchipawan doubtfully in connection with the seventh village.

In further illustration of the untrustworthiness of Zuñi tradition, especially when dating from such a remote period as the one referred to, it may be remarked that the Messrs. Mindeleff, while endeavoring to gather from the Zuñis traditional data regarding the coming of Coronado for use in connection with their archeologic studies in Zuñi and Tusayan, found that they were acquainted only with the Spanish version, and uttered statements concerning incidents of the march that Indians could have learned only from recent contact with whites acquainted with the Spanish history of the discovery. Again, the Zuñis claim to have preserved a tradition of a visit to them by Cabeza de Vaca before the "Black Mexican" came.* That such a story could have gained foothold in Zuñi only in recent years scarcely needs proof, for the question arose but twenty-five years ago, and since 1886 Bandelier has repeatedly and incontrovertibly proven that Vaca's route lay hundreds of miles away.

In view, then, of the untrustworthiness of Zuñi tradition, as above exemplified, can the persistent myth of the natives that K'iakima was the pueblo where Estévan met death stand in the way of such overpowering testimony to the contrary? Should the story of the negro who by a powerful kick was sped through the air back whence he had come—a story suspended by a single strand of truth—take precedence as historical evidence over the statement of Jaramillo, who visited Hawikuh with Coronado only a year later and specifically recorded that "here was where they killed Estevanillo," or of the declaration in 1626 of Fray Geronimo de Zarate Salmeron, who "mentions Hawikuh positively as the *Civola* of *Fray Marcos* and of *Coronado*"?† It is true Jaramillo wrote these words some years afterward; but would he have been more likely to err in such an important matter than would the unwritten story of the natives? Furthermore, Jaramillo is supported by Castañeda, who, in Mr. Bandelier's language, "makes no direct mention of the locality, but it is plain that he labors under the same impression." Such an important event in history as the scene of the murder of the actual discoverer of the "new country," the strange forerunner of civilization in the Southwest, the first black man the Indians had ever seen, could not have been forgotten in a year. Coronado, writing

* Haynes, *op. cit.*, p. 483.

† Bandelier, *Contributions*, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

from *Hawikuh* in 1540, says: "The death of the negro is perfectly certain, because many of the things which he wore have been found, and the Indians say that they killed him here."

In 1893 Mr. Bandelier's *Gilded Man* appeared. Most unfortunately for the author, who was in South America at the time of its publication, the editing of the volume and the revision of the proofs were left to others, whose knowledge of Southwestern history was so scant that many errors were suffered to creep in. Among these is a statement, contradictory of all the evidence presented in Bandelier's previous writings, to the effect that Coronado did not go to *Hawikuh*, "fifteen miles southwest of *Zuñi*, the village nearest to him,* but to 'Oa-quima' [*K'iakima*], because [in the words of *Jaramillo*] *the negro was killed there.*" I cannot believe that Mr. Bandelier would have allowed this statement to remain, since he has always declined as evidence the assertion of *Jaramillo*† concerning the village at which the negro was killed, on the ground that it was written years after his visit. If Mr. Bandelier's statement is intentional, then it further substantiates the evidence which I have above presented, that *Hawikuh* was the pueblo at which *Estévan* was killed, as the *Traslado de las Nuevas* (Col. Doc. Indias, xix, p. 529) will attest. This document maintains that on the 19th day of July (1540) Coronado went "four leagues‡ from this city [*Granada*] to see a rock where they told him that the Indians of this province had a stronghold, and he returned the same day." That the stronghold is the great rock mesa of *Tâaiyalone*, or Thunder mountain, on a knoll at the base of which stood *K'iakima*, needs no proof. It is the only impregnable height in the vicinity suitable for habitation, contains on its summit the ruins of defensive structures, is well known through direct statements in Spanish history under the name of the "Rock of *K'iakima*" as a place of refuge when the inhabitants of *Cibola-Zuñi* fled from their villages in the valley in fear of Spanish or Indian invaders, and, as approximately stated by the *Traslado*, is situated four

* Note the statement "the village nearest to him," which also must have been the village nearest to *Niza* and *Estévan*.

† "En pocos días de camino llegaron a la primera poblacion de *Cibola*, adonde mataron a *Estevanico de Orantes.*"—*Herrera, dec. VI, lib. ix, cap. xi, p. 205.* Y aquí mataron a *Estebanillo el Negro*, que habia venido con *Dorantes*, de la *Florida*, y volvía con *fray Márcos de Niza.*"—*Jaramillo Relacion, in Col. Doc. de Indias, XIV, p. 308.*

‡ The distances given are somewhat underestimated.

or five leagues from Granada or Hawikuh—not K'iakima, which stood at its base.

Again, in the *Gilded Man* (p. 160), alluding to the mesas southward from Thunder mountain, from which, as Mr. Bandelier believes, Niza first caught sight of Cibola, occurs the reference: "There, too, the remains of a wooden cross were visible till a few years ago. It has been supposed that this was the cross which the monk erected; considering the dry atmosphere of the region, the supposition, even if it is not probable, is not to be wholly rejected."

My personal regard for the author refuses to make me believe that this statement is made seriously.* The fact that the friar was possessed of "more fright than food," and had been reduced to the extreme of necessity, precludes the thought that he remained on the spot longer than was necessary to break the limbs of a tree with which to form a cross † (its arms, in all probability, being secured by a shred of his cassock), and to heap around its base a pile of stones. Could even a more stable structure have stood the snows of three hundred and fifty Zuñi winters? If a cross stood on this spot in recent times, we may more safely attribute its erection to the death by the wayside of some unfortunate Mexican, for such is the custom of his people.

That Hawikuh was the village first seen by Estévan, who there met death; that it was the "city of Cibola" rising from the plain which Niza and his Piman guides viewed from the southern heights in 1539, and that it was the pueblo which Coronado stormed in the summer of the following year, seems indisputable.

* It will be observed that Mr. Bandelier does not claim that he saw the cross, nor does he give the source of information. As no mention is made of it in any of his previous writings, I am inclined to believe that the reference is the work of the editor.

† "With the aid of the Indians, I erected on the spot a great heap of stones and placed on top a small cross, not having the tools necessary for making a larger one." (Niza, quoted by Bandelier: *Documentary History*, op. cit., p. 17.)



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